

Washington, DC – **Congressman Mike Honda** today joined Silicon Valley leaders in supporting the decision by the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority to request a temporary withdrawal of the BART to San José project from preliminary engineering in the federal New Starts process.

Congressman Honda issued the following statement:

“Today, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) formally requested that the U.S. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) withdraw the BART extension to Santa Clara County from preliminary engineering (PE) status.

As the lead proponent for this project on Capitol Hill, I support VTA's decision to withdraw the project. This decision by VTA allows the agency additional time to bring the project into conformity with FTA requirements for New Starts projects.

We all appreciate the highly competitive nature of the New Starts program. VTA's action today signals our region's commitment to putting forward a project that meets all federal requirements, competes well against other proposals, and merits full and unreserved federal partnership.

I have been assured that, during this interim period, VTA and FTA will continue to work closely together to enhance the readiness of this proposed BART extension, with specific

emphasis given to the project's financial plan and cost effectiveness.

I'm confident that BART will be extended to Santa Clara County, and I'm proud of the significant progress the Santa Clara County Congressional delegation has achieved over the

last five years. Together, we have secured more than \$11 million in Congressional earmarks, as well as an authorization and favorable treatment for the project in

recently-passed surface transportation legislation. I will be working hard in the coming months to inform that Congressional leaders about VTA's decision and retain their support.

Our region has a strong tradition of sound transportation planning. Santa Clara County's last New Starts project—the Tasman West Light Rail extension—came in ahead of schedule and below budget. We are a self-help region; nowhere else in the nation do we so significantly have citizens stepping up to the plate and funding improved transportation networks that will improve our community. We are willing to pay the bulk of the costs of those improvements ourselves.

The BART extension to San Jose must reaffirm this hard earned reputation. This project is critical to the future of Silicon Valley, and promises to bolster the quality of life and mitigate

the traffic gridlock that threatens to undermine our nation's most dynamic region.

I am encouraged by the new VTA leadership, and hope and expect that local Santa Clara leaders will come together to make the difficult decisions necessary to get this project back on track.”